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ABSTRACT

In exploring the use of the learning process to foster creativity among children from 0-3 years, we must free ourselves from antiquated and erroneous beliefs that school is the only environment in which creativity and learning takes place, and that the teacher is the sole agent of such achievements. Our culture, our environment, and our communication (interpersonal and mass media) are more pervasive factors. An overwhelming urgency exists for revolutionary changes in both the schools and society. The President and the U.S. Office of Education must advocate policy decisions to stimulate communication with creative community resource persons, to develop the creative potential in teachers and teachers-in-training, to establish a National Institute for Creativity, and to nurture development of new sources for creative education beginning with the burgeoning field of early childhood, becoming an integral and pertinent part of the educational program in the schools and culminating in aesthetic education available for the general population. (WY)

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CREATIVITY AND THE LEARNING PROCESS

Report of Forum 6

1970 White House Conference on Children

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T O F R E E O U R C H I L D R E N

The weight of this sad time we must obey;
Speak what we feel, not what we ought to say.

King Lear

The Report

of Forum 6 of the 1970 White House Conference on Children*

CREATIVITY AND THE LEARNING PROCESS

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I FOREWORD 1.

The White House Conference on Children gave a mandate to the Forum on Creativity and the Learning Process to explore the use of the learning process to foster creativity among children from 0-13 years. It also directed us "to define problems, seek new knowledge, evaluate past successes and failures, and outline alternative courses of action" relating to the child as a creative being.

In seeking to meet this challenge, the Forum has been jolted by the realization that the Child of America is growing up in captivity. His prison is his culture. His prison is his environment. His prison is his communication. His nation alone can free him, but the price for doing so is high.

The child is the insurance of American society. We must either be prepared to pay the premiums today so that we might reap future benefits, or forfeit the payments today and bemoan our griefs tomorrow. We say that the child is close and dear to us. The test of our sincerity will be measured by whether or not important forces in American society act to free him and thereby spur his creativity and learning.

Federal, state and local government officials must use the prestigious influence of their offices to demand and implement positive and progressive change in American society. Educators, including superintendents, principals and teachers must discard their outmoded and rigidly entrenched attitudes which often stifle those courageous voices that plead for change. All

American citizens must begin to demonstrate through action concern not only for the learning experiences and achievements of their own children, but of all children in America.

America must begin to show forth in new radical actions its concern for the poor white child from Appalachia as well as the black child from Chicago. We must be as concerned about the brown child from Florida as we are about the Indian-American child from Oklahoma, as concerned about the affluent child from Michigan as we are about the Chinese-American child from New York and about the Mexican-American child from Los Angeles. All of these are our children. They are all captives. And we must free them.

The question before us is: shall our nation encourage creativity or calamity?, learning or lamentation?, determination or disaster? The captives, our children, are imprisoned. They must be freed. And we must free ourselves. Accelerated action on the recommendations in this report are essential <u>today</u>, or we predict there will be no bright tomorrow for this nation.

We are called upon today to free ourselves and all men from all oppressive climates. The dehumanized climate that pervades over our nation is reflected in our homes, our government and our schools. It is a reflection of the interrelatedness of the societal ills of economic deprivation, confrontation, war, hunger, inadequate housing, racism, poverty, unemployment, corruption,

and a host of others. Our children cannot thrive as creative persons in such a climate of dehumanization since it denudes the seeds of creativity before they have taken root, and it stabs the heart of learning before its beats are firm. The nation can and must address itself to the societal ills that confront it, or it will build passive cripples of yesterday rather than active children of tomorrow.

We must free ourselves from our antiquated and erroneous beliefs that school is the only environment in which creativity and learning takes place, and that the teacher is the sole agent of such achievements. The whole community is that environment and all its resources must provide those experiences which children are denied by being confined within classroom walls and regimented spaces, or within the home. New roles must emerge for traditional resources such as libraries, museums, homes, theatres. At the same time new resources must be tapped so as to broaden the child's view of his neighborhood, his people and his world. The neighborhood filling station, the grocery store, the lumber yard, shoemaker and butcher shops, the parks, the waterfront, construction sites, post offices, hospitals, streets, radio and television centers, newspaper offices -- all these provide learning environments in which the child learns through questions, wonder, joy, discovery and curiosity. The school with limited walls builds a vacuum around the creative and learning urges of the child; the school without walls builds a ladder out of those same urges and enables him to climb.

At the same time we must free ourselves from narrow visions about what the school might become. One of the neglected possibilities of our schools is to provide the basis for those vicarious experiences which are necessary to broaden a child's horizon and introduce him to a larger world. In another day, children came to school information-poor but experientially rich. The task of the school was clear: to provide broader information. Today a child comes to school information-rich but experientially poor. He brings with him a wealth of information, but at the same time he lacks the skills necessary to handle what he knows. Under these conditions, the school is called upon to provide the child with those experiences necessary for the development of these skills. This means a reversal in the function that the school has played in the last years in American society. It means that teachers and children must be equipped with those skills that foster creativity and learning, skills that will build children of <u>knowing</u>, rather than children of knowledge.

Children are living symbols of growth and change and our schools play a tremendous and frightening role in their development. Therefore a massive committment to productive change in American education is mandatory. As we race toward the 21st century, we must either listen to the whispers of change or be deafened by the screams of change.

In the course of the decade since the last White House Conference on Children, a number of issues that will affect the child in the 70's have surfaced. The child of the 70's will be the young adult of the 80's and the leader in the 21st century. As such, the education of this child of the 70's should be based on man's best prediction of what the future will demand of functional persons rather than what was demanded in the past.

One such issue that has surfaced is the communication gap that increasingly exists among generations of the world. Another is the spiralling rise of nationalism and cultural pride in the many peoples that make up this country. The latter especially has been reflected in the re-emergence of a belief in the human dignity of every individual.

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Still another issue is that of a rapid rate of change. Since the turn of the century America has witnessed many changes that have affected its people. It experienced a great industrial boom, vast migrations to its shores from all parts of the world, and the emergence of huge urban complexes and ghettos. America

experienced a great depression, followed by a devastating world war. The 1950's witnessed the partial transformation of America's industrial power to technological power. All of these factors collectively created new problems for our educational systems which responded with solutions appropriate to the times. Today, in this age of technology, new challenges face our educators and revolutionary responses are demanded of them. Our technological competence has revolutionized our industrial and business capabilities; but it has also dehumanized us -- our environment, our institutions, our homes, and our schools.

It is this technological dehumanization, the communication gaps, the quest for human dignity, the continuing rapid rate of change and the growth of the urban ghettos that should determine the child's education in the 1970's. The question remains: will our educational establishment respond as creatively to these new demands as it did in the past in the light of other needs? This issue -- the creative responses of our institutions to the new problems we face -- is crucial for the concerns of our Forum on Creativity and the Learning Process.

In our Culture:

Since the end of World War II, dozens of nations have cut away the chains of various "isms" that formerly bound them, and transformed themselves into independent countries. In an effort to ease the pain of straightening their backs and standing on their own feet again, these nations instilled a sense of nationalism and cultural pride in their citizens. The cultural heritages that have re-emerged from the mists of the past have drifted over to America and affect every facet of its life. This nation is now compelled to come to grips with a new present and to gird itself for a new future -- the future of a new bold people who, like our children, are of the here and now.

In our Environment:

The rapid changes that have confronted us in the 20th century and their attendant demands have culminated in technological advancements that stun the imagination. But one of the accompanying results has been the disruption of man's environment -- both natural and and human -- and it is the latter one that commands our immediate attention. A plant cannot thrive in an atmosphere devoid of certain nutrients; nor can a child grow in an atmosphere that is alien to those life forces he needs for growth. He needs the companionship and understanding of his elders. He needs their attentive ears and trust. He needs the opportunity of choice so that responsibility can surround him. And he needs the privilege of failure so that he may dare and grow. He must decide his own destiny and will not

permit another's to be thrust upon him. He must influence our thinking and being. He must demand that his needs of today, and the interpersonal relationships that bring a human scale into his daily living be met. He must not neglect technology, but embrace it. But he must not let it de-humanize his being.

In our Communication:

One of the major incongruities of recent decades is that we ushered in an extraordinary age of communication -- flight, telephones, electricity, radio, television, satellites. By so doing man established a closer link with his fellowmen everywhere. Yet, at the same time, he severed those human links that he formerly shared with some of his fellowmen. Wide distances and differences now separate the youth from the adult, the affluent from the deprived, the uneducated from the schooled, and the parent from the child. Lines of communication must be re-established among all Americans; they must become untangled so that contact will be possible again. Without communication we shall plunge headlong into disaster. With it, we will begin to talk and listen to each other again.

IV. CREATIVITY AND THE LEARNING PROCESS

We have reached a stage in the evolution of man when as a species we may become obsolete unless we can rise to a higher plane of creative thought and action. Widespread, deep, and rapid changes are taking place in the structures of our lives: in basic institutions, such as family, school, and church, and in the very fabric of individual experience and personal consciousness.

The creative process is the process of adaptive change and development in the organization of life. In the creative act, something new is brought into being. There is urgent need in every aspect of American society for persons who can act creatively.

We must place our hope in our ability to transform our present society. This calls for a new mentality and a new creative spirit among us. It also calls for tolerance of dissent and rebelliousness, for these often are the initial expression of a creative discontent. Some of our most creative children and youth are among those most disenchanted with our way of life. They are demanding a new society and a new education which will enable them to transform our world.

A crisis in our culture has thus emerged. The future of our country and of mankind demands that we address the issue of creativity, no matter how painful that might be. It could be quite painful, for this is also a time when people are seeking stability. New ways threaten old ways and upset established

patterns. But we need to take the risk and we need to protect and to encourage the personal development of creativity. We must create a society which makes possible the releasing of the creative spirit that is in every person. To do this we will need to emphasize in our children the cultivation of independence, individuality, freedom, spontaneity, and originality.

The creative child whom we wish to nurture is curious; wonders and questions; seeks new experiences; is open to the world; is independent and free from social and group pressures to conform at the cost of individuality; is willing to risk error, to play with ideas and experiment; is willing to change and to live with change.

Such a child is in the heart of every child. The big question is this: do we intend to encourage and release that spirit among us or to snuff it out?

The child is born a free spirit: that is, the young child knows no solution to his problems until he experiments, risks, decides, invents, creates a solution which leaves him satisfied.

The creative act is a natural reaction of the free spirit wherever confronted with a problem situation for which no known solution exists. As the need for problem solving decreases the creative act becomes subdued, sometimes to the point of nonexistence. However, the potential for creative action never disappears; it is merely sublimated by a system which proposes to "know" and to teach what is known.

As the child grows, the system that governs his growth (the total learning-living environment) tends to inhibit free and natural response to his world by subsituting adult-oriented solution systems. The creative response to a problem situation is a desirable one in most instances for such a response increases one's self-identity. It leads to the development of an individual who can communicate under all conditions, who can respond to any stimulus, who can contribute to all levels of societal needs.

The leisurely life of yesteryear is no longer. Daily each human being is faced with problem situations that demand immediate solutions. Today's child is faced with an ever-increasing need to establish an identity that is concerned, responsible and responsive to the everchanging demands of an unbelievably complex social structure. Today's solutions may well be tomorrow's problems -- thus the need for all our children to become creative problem-solvers may be argued in the same vein as the needs for the salvation of our society.

V. FACTORS INFLUENCING CREATIVITY AND THE LEARNING PROCESS

There are three main factors that influence creativity and the learning process: Culture, Environment and Communication. All of these are inter-related and each performs a significant role in the development of the child.

THE ROLE OF CULTURE

Education is a process in life as a whole. It should not be identified solely or even largely with schools. The culture itself carries the most important messages to the growing child. The culture educates.

Cultural forces are never fully under control. Like the forces of nature, they are massive in comparison with the very limited power that man can exert through rational planning and design. Nevertheless, through the exercise of foresight and planning we can to some extent influence the pattern of development of the culture. Choice is possible, and because we can choose we are responsible.

Planning and policy decisions, however, are all too often neglectful of the psychological and educational impact of the events that follow from them. Sometimes, narrow regard for political considerations leads our nation into actions which negatively affect the development of the creative spirit in our children and youth. In contrast, our exploration of space and our journey to the moon have a profound effect in communicating our creative potential.

Such national actions are educative events of great psychological significance. In our national planning we must never neglect the meaning to individuals of the course we embark upon. As a nation we must make a concentrated effort to eliminate negative policies as a first step in our concern for the nurturing of the creative spirit in our children. A sense of dignity, identity, worth, and individuality are necessary for the creative life. As an example, national, state and local programs in welfare need to be evaluated and planned with such characteristics in mind. The question of a minimum guaranteed annual income cannot be seen as purely an economic problem. Government must take seriously the psychological aspect of its decision-making in relationship to the need for releasing creativity in our society.

It follows from this that creativity depends upon the emotional climate in the culture in its major institutions: the home, the church, the school, the mass media and other forms of public communication, the town or city, the state and nation, and international relations. Creativity is a way of being.

The questions for us as we look forward to 1980 are these: What shall we ask of the culture for our children? How can the culture facilitate the development of the creative potential of children?

Certain general principles can be seen to be emerging in the life style of the generation coming to maturity. There are: (1) a respect for the individual as a human being regardless of his

station in life or the particular aspects of the individual's fatedness (race, sex, physique, social class, etc.); (2) a respect for privacy and self-determination and a dislike for intrusive authority; (3) the importance of communal relationships that are not distorted by striving for power over others or manipulativeness; in brief, a more candid and honest basis for human relatedness is desired.

We must be alert to the rate of change in the culture and try to find a balance between the preservation of valuable social forms and the deliberate introduction of radically new forms. We need both conservation and transformation. We must educate our children to value established institutions, as well as to value innovation and the re-forming of social institutions and our way of life.

Culture is everything that is non-biologically inherited, yet the richness and contributions of America's varied cultural heritages have still to be fully recognized and appreciated by educators. They have traditionally adhered to stressing the glories of European culture as if this were the only cultural root of America's heritage. This is perhaps partly understandable since the majority of America's citizen are of European stock, but it is also most reprehensible since America is comprised of vast numbers of minority people who have age-old traditions and cultures of which they are justifiably proud.

These cultural minorities have helped to build this nation and to establish its global image. Too often, our image of the minorities is a grudging and superficial one, and through neglect and ignorance we deem it unimportant and worthy of scant attention in our teacher training institutions and classrooms. This deplorable policy must now be reversed or the turmoils and passions now raging in college and high school classrooms will be unleashed in those on the elementary level. The teacher-in-training must be exposed to the various cultural heritages of this country and such exposure should not be confined within the college walls. (EPOCH - Educational Programming of Cultural Heritage - in Berkeley, California is an example of a cultural heritage environment). Such exposure should not be limited to just a required course or two, but must command prominence throughout many years of the curriculum.

The teacher who is exposed to such cultural enrichment will without doubt become an enriched human being. His own self-awareness will be increased, his sense of the worth of every other human being will be heightened, and he will be able to relate to those precious children he teaches through human approaches that will spark creativity and learning. Children too must be exposed to their country's cultural heritages, because through them their own horizons will be widened and they will regard and respect other children for what they are.

Our American culture must be radically transformed by whatever means necessary. The alternatives are clear. Our children,

the citizens of tomorrow and our leaders of tomorrow, will either live in an America of righteousness, or in an America of ruin.

THE ROLE OF ENVIRONMENT

Environment exerts an extremely powerful influence on creativity. We have the power to influence the physical, the interpersonal, and the societal environments significantly in the coming decade. To this great task we must direct ourselves.

Our physical environment has an important bearing on creativity. If a child is deprived of basic necessities of nourishment and protection from physical discomfort, he will be deprived of the opportunity to be as creative as he might otherwise be. A physically deprived child may of course exercise creativity by the way he works at survival. But such acts of creativity are not maximally satisfying to himself, nor are they beneficial to society.

The physical environment is a necessary but not sufficient condition for the growth of creativity. Given the basic conditions which allow for creative growth, it is the human environment, the inter-personal environment, which becomes the all important factor. When minimum basic needs have been met, the key questions become: Who are the people in the child's environment who determines how creative he may become? What sorts of interpersonal environments can these people create that will foster creativity, and how may significant people in the child's interpersonal environment learn to behave in ways that foster creativity?

Human dignity is basic to creativity, and yet millions of our children from minority groups are being reduced in their human potential by oppression. It is impossible because of the environment in which they live for the creative spirit to be released within them. We must increase our efforts as a society to ensure human dignity and mutual respect for the spark of creativity in everyone.

There are three primary groups which influence how much each child develops his capacity of creativity. The first is the adults in the home, those who are responsible for the child's care and upbringing. At home the child takes in, as naturally as breathing, styles of experiencing the world, of attempting to cope with it and to change it, and styles and methods of communicating with other people.

The second group of powerfully influential people consists of the peers of the child, siblings and others. Life styles of other children serve as models and are a powerful force in shaping attitudes and behaviors which contribute to the growth or restriction of creativity.

The third major group comprising the interpersonal environment of a child are his teachers, broadly defined. This group includes all those outside the home who take responsibility for systematic supervision of the child's activities, from preschool day care centers and recreational facilities to formal schooling, including church activities. Indeed, it is possible for anyone, a

neighbor perhaps, a counselor, a distant relative, to provide a model which directs a child into creative channels. Public persons, as well as images of the great dead, also provide important models for the child's growth.

To promote such growth, we must respect each child as a worthwhile individual, regardless of any specific shortcomings in his behavior which may require correction. We must respect his potential for making meaningful and creative contributions to the world around him. Lack of such respect will tend to stunt his growth. In order to develop his potential, it is desirable to promote and recognize small steps, representing growth from the position in which the child now is, toward that which he will later become. To judge a child exclusively or primarily in terms of adult-conceived standards (where he should be rather than where he is) creates frustration for both parties and is destructive of the child's motivation to learn and be creative.

The interpersonal environment conducive to the growth of learning and creativity is perhaps best described in terms of specific behaviors which tend to convey one's respect toward the child. We believe that it is self-evident that the adult must make the first attempt at changing and modifying his behavior, even though we observe regretfully that in current practice this burden is most always placed on the child. To enhance the development of creativity important people in the child's environment should:

1. Listen very attentively to children's opinions and perceptions.

2. Be sensitive not only to what the child says but to his feelings about himself and others.

3. Be sensitive to the child's self-concept and the relationship which his image of himself bears to his capacity and willingness to learn and to express himself.

4. Speak to the child in a way that conveys to him the knowledge that he has been listened to, that his feelings are understood, and that his ideas are respected whether they are agreed with or not.

5. Interact with the child in ways that encourage him to weigh and evaluate the ideas of others in the light of his own experiences rather than to accept them on faith.

6. Provide many opportunities for the child to work collectively with peers in projects of mutual interest so as to gain experience in creative efforts that require collaboration.

7. Provide the child with as many opportunities as are feasible for him to evaluate his own work privately as well as publicly and to find ways of evaluating the work of others in a constructive manner.

8. Offer the child as many opportunities as possible to share in making the decisions about how he should behave in various circumstances so that he may often experience the consequences, positive and negative, of his own decisions. In addition to making decisions for himself, experiences should be provided for group decision-making through democratic processes.

Children cannot be put into two piles, those who are creative and those who are not. Every child is filled with potential. A school is the place where a child spends a great portion of his waking hours. Somehow in that place we must find a way to release and nurture the growth of his creative potential. The marking system, the single text, overcrowded classrooms, the large consolidated school, the grade-level, lock-step, right-one-answer syndrome encouraged by many parents and found in many of our nation's schools, all tend to work against creativity. The growth of a child's creative potential demands emphases on freedom, individual choice, small groups, experimentation and other such qualities. Yet our schools are too often grim, dull anxiety-ridden places, not only for the minorities in our urban ghetto schools but also for the most wealthy in our suburban contemporary educational edifices.

> "It is not possible to spend any prolonged period visiting public school classrooms without being appalled by the mutilation visible everywhere -- multilation of spontaneity, of joy in learning, of pleasure in creating, of sense of self. Because adults take the schools so much for granted, they fail to appreciate what grim, joyless places most American schools are, how oppressive and petty are the rules by which they are governed, how intellectually sterile and esthetically barren the atmosphere, what an appalling lack of civility obtains on the part of teachers and principals, what contempt they unconsciously display for children as children." 1

We cannot afford to underestimate the psychological brutality, dehumanization and irrelevance of life in many of our nation's schools. The creative spirit in man is being destroyed within the schools many of our children are forced to attend. We must begin to demand that the schools make good on their promises to be concerned about the whole child and his human development as a whole

person. The government and all the people must become a strong public voice, an advocate of change at all levels of our educational system. We must begin to reveal the dehumanizing forces at work.

Formal schooling in our society encompasses more and more of a child's time and energy, but such formal learning settings tend to work against the development of creativity. The elimination of the six-hour school day and the encouragement of alternatives for learning are essential. For example the community must be utilized as a laboratory. There a learner might seek the solution of a problem which he cares about, regardless of its educational by-product. "To turn our schools around, we can begin, first, to concern ourselves more with learning and less with schooling."[2] The teachers in a community laboratory could be drawn from the vast number of talented creative persons available in every community but basically outside the present school system. Our schools continue to weed out, or discourage, our most imaginative children. The creative child may sometimes be a nuisance to his teacher and to his peers and a liability in the usual classroom. Somehow we must change our attitudes so that rather than weeding out these most imaginative and difficult children, we encourage them in constructive directions.

Public schooling is becoming an increasingly pervasive part of the process of a child's socialization. Under these conditions, the actual function of the school has been transformed from a learning/teaching function to that of socialization, selection, and

certification. This make it difficult to establish or expand programs which might help develop the creative potential in children. Immediate joy, fun and play, so important for creative expression, all have difficulty existing in an institution which is called upon first of all to determine the vocational future of a child.

The future begins in the present. The decisions we make today as to how we will shape and design the environment in which we live and the schools which our children attend commits the future. If we have faith in man's creative potential we cannot be content to affirm that he is creative while doing nothing to nurture that spirit into being.

THE ROLE OF COMMUNICATION

Communication embraces those interpersonal relationships and forms of expression - both verbal and non-verbal - which are essential for creating those kinds of experiences a child needs to become a fully creative person.

The child communicates from the instant when he screams his way into the world. And as he grows he creates and learns through communication. The child "is the embodiment of creativity, as he gropes his way around space, colors with strange combinations of crayons, dances to tell stories with his body, questions, plays, explores, builds, cuts ... and daydreams."[3] As a child matures

daydreams are transformed into living experiences, both at home and in the school, where today a huge communication chasm exists. If a new generation of children is to bridge this chasm, communication within the classroom must be a major focal point of our concern. Communication must be established between the child and teacher through participation, discussion, relationships, trust, ideas, feelings, understanding, but regretfully these factors are often absent in countless numbers of American classrooms. As a result, creativity and learning are diminished. The time has now come for school systems to rectify this.

The National Center for Educational Statistics of the U.S. Office of Education reports that during the school year 1969-1970 there were 19,169 public school districts in operation throughout the country. [4] These districts in turn employ vast numbers of teachers. These teachers are armed with university degrees and they are expected to unleash the creative and learning potential of the children entrusted to their charge. We have placed this awesome burden upon our teachers, yet we have omitted from their training the most important aspect of the creative and learning process: Communition Skills. Before any learning or creativity can take place in the classroom -- even with the most gifted and academically-qualified teacher -- the latter must be able to strike those common human chords that must exist between the teacher and the child. The teacher must be viewed as an actor. Not in the narrow 'entertainer' sense, but in the wider sense as a creator, a discoverer, an originator, an enabler, a motivator, an inventor, a participator, a communicator. The actor's basic tool is his

trained knowledge and use of himself as an instrument of communication. Similarly, the teacher is the instrument of learning and action, and consequently he is the instructional medium -- both the medium and the message -- the link between the child and the act of learning. The teacher must know his own instrument, how to unlock it, how to develop it, how to keep it tuned, how to play it, how to strike those vibrations within himself that will tune in his listeners to the creative and learning process. His essential task must be how to create and communicate a learning experience within the classroom and how to sustain the life of that creation. The teacher's ability to communicate determines his effectiveness in the classroom. The teacher's ability to use himself -- his instrument -- determines his ability to communicate, and thus to teach. Communication skills are human skills which must be taught through professional approaches. They cannot be acquired through wishful thinking or chance. We are not talking here about speech courses, or sensitivity training, or human relations sessions for teachers. We are stating unequivocally that the professionally-oriented project model in communication skills which we envision and advocate, to our knowledge, has never been launched anywhere in the United States.

Such a project model might be built around a group of enablers originators, motivators, etc. such as Peace Corps returnees. Many of them are often culturally and experientially rich, and they have worked in environments other than the traditional classroom, sometimes under adverse conditions. Such a group of individuals, after adequate training in communication skills would begin to

make inroads in the classroom which would result in the blossoming of creativity and the reaping of the fruits of learning.

Communication skills are also pertinent to, and affect the world of the child, both at home and at school. "The child who comes to school with good communication skills finds it easy to enter in academic discussions and extend his communicative facility. Other children who enter school with poor communication skills find it difficult to participate in abstract academic activities. They may be thwarted in the acquisition of communicative ability and consequently become more skillful in tuning out rather than tuning in."[5]

Children who are taught communication skills by such enablers described above would be children whose self-awareness and self-confidence will motivate their academic achievement. They would be a priceless asset not only to their homes, their schools and community, but also to their nation.

There is another form of communication that is essential to the creativity and learning of the child. This is communication through the senses, learning through the arts. As President Richard M. Nixon has said:

> "The arts have the rare capacity to help heal division among our own people and to vault some of the barriers that divide the world."[6]

All the arts need to be made an integral part of the general education of all children. The aesthetic life belongs to every person as an essential part of his being. Children need to learn to think with their senses. Truly productive thinking, in whatever area, takes place in the realm of imagery. What the mind does in the arts is what it does elsewhere, and the need for creativity demands that we overcome the long-standing isolation and neglect of the arts in society and education. Perhaps the real problem is even more fundamental. In our schools we tend to split sense and thought, feeling and reason. In a sense, we have educated a nation of deprived children. The distrust of the senses is a root cause of many of our problems. The prejudicial discrimination against the senses must be overcome in our educational system where from grade 1 the senses begin to lose their educational status. At best, the arts are reduced to a program for those with particular talents or a supplement to the study of words and numbers. The arts are usually not considered to be an equal partner in the academic and school curriculum or to be a fundamental part of American public education. (An outstanding exception is the project model in University City, Missouri schools.)

Too often when "the arts" are mentioned in a school context they are assumed to be frills, and involvement in them is usually limited to art, music or theatrical productions for those few students whose talent has surfaced in these directions. We reject such narrow assumptions and believe it is most essential that all the arts be made an integral and pertinent part of the education of all children in the nation's public schools. And by all the

arts we include theatre, dance, film, architecture, environmental design, painting, scuplture, music, etc. Exposure to, and knowledge of these contribute indispensably to the development of a reasoning, imaginative human being -- the creative person. The arts are the most proven means at our disposal to strengthen the ability of the senses, without which productive, creative thinking is impossible in any field of endeavor, and particularly in the field of education. The child often 'finds' himself through immersion in the arts and is motivated toward academic accomplishment. The arts must become an equal partner in school curriculums, and those who frame curriculums must realize and admit, that more than any other factor, the arts contribute immeasurably toward the fulfillment and enrichment of the human spirit.

The quality of life which we will bequeath to our children of tomorrow, to our leaders of tomorrow, to our nation of tomorrow, must begin to be enhanced today. Culture, Environment and Communication are unquestionable attributes of that treasured quality of life for which we strive and yearn. We must command our energies and commit ourselves through positive and determined action today, or resign ourselves to the unthinkable thought that inaction today means that there will be no tomorrow.

VI. RECOMMENDATIONS

1. To meet the need of the overwhelming urgency for revolutionary change in the schools and in society, for a new source of creative teaching in our schools, we recommend:

a. that the President of the United States must become the most vociferous advocate of such change;

b. that the U.S. Office of Education enable school superintendents to seek out and employ creative community resource persons who do not necessarily meet the usual teacher certification requirements, but whose individual talent can serve as an adjunct to the normal instructional programs; and further that federal funds be made available to support such local programs on a shared long-term basis;

c. that programs of self-renewal and further development of creative potential in teachers be established and financially supported by the U.S. Office of Education through such local resources as college and university extension programs and growth centers;

d. that the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare establish a National Institute for Creativity where the most advanced techniques and results of research on creativity may be synthesized and disseminated to school systems throughout the nation;

e. that research directed specifically to the selection and training of creative candidates for teacher training both in early education and in the elementary grades be financially supported by the U.S. Office of Education.

2. To meet the need for continuous local self-appraisal and new program development for creative education, for new sources of energy and ideas in the burgeoning field of early education, we recommend:

a. that the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare establish a core of independent professional consultants who could be made available at federal expense to local school systems to enable them to engage in self-planning and program development in creativity and the learning process;

b. that the U.S. Office of Education financially support the development of pre-school programs, including the possibility of developing such programs through private enterprise;

c. that a system be devised to collect and disseminate information regarding model projects and programs which encourage the development of creativity in the schools, in colleges, and at the community level.

3. To meet the need for education in the recognition and expression of feeling, for active firsthand rather than vicarious educational experiences, and to aid teachers in enabling children to free their imaginations and discover their full human potential, we recommend:

a. that the U.S. Office of Education and the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare financially support the development of special pre-service and in-service training programs in cultural heritage, interpersonal relations and communication skills for teachers, parents, para-professionals, and pre-school day-care workers;

b. the extension of aesthetic education through programs in which the arts are recognized as an integral part of general education;

c. the recognition of existing independent project models related to items a and b above.

FOOTNOTES

1. Silberman, Charles E. Crisis in the Classroom, Random House, New York, 1970.

2. Scribner, Harvey B. The New York Times, October 6, 1970, p.49.

3. Kornbluth, Francis S. and Bard, Bernard. Creativity and the Teacher, American Federation of Teachers, AFL-CIO, Chicago, 1966, p.5.

4. U.S. Office of Education. Profiles of Children, Table #73, Chart #110. (Special publication prepared for the White House Conference on Children, 1970).

5. Illinois Committee for 1970 White House Conference on Children and Youth. Communication, Committment, Action. Springfield, Illinois, 1970, pp. 27-28.

6. Nixon, President Richard.